

CINE 412: Theory of Cinema
Fall 2004
Dr. Jane M. Greene, Denison University

Class Meetings: MWF, 10:30-11:20
Screenings: Sunday, 7:30pm and 9:30pm

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Office Hours: MW, 1:30pm – 3:30pm (or by appointment) Office: Cinema Building

Course Goals and Philosophy

This class surveys major concepts and readings in classical and contemporary film theory. We will examine how selected theorists have reflected on the nature and function(s) of cinema as well as its potential effects on individual spectators and society as a whole. Much of the work we will consider draws on other disciplines, including art history and theory, linguistics, political philosophy, psychoanalysis and psychology, and gender studies.

We **will** be screening films to clarify points made by the theorists. However, our primary focus will be the written theoretical arguments advanced by the authors. I do not expect you to agree with everything you read, but I do expect you to read everything attentively. We will engage each reading critically, examining the structure of the argument, its use of evidence and its advantages and disadvantages. In your written assignments, you will continue to develop this critical approach, analyzing the strengths and weakness of an argument, offering observations that have not been made in class, and drawing your own connections between theories.

Required Texts

- *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, Sixth Edition, edited by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen
- Reading Packet, available on electronic reserve

Course Requirements and Grade Breakdown

- Productive Participation and Quizzes: 15%
- Paper #1: 20%
- Paper #2: 20%
- Paper #3: 20%
- Final Exam: 25%

Attendance Policy

Being present, being on time, and being actively engaged in class are all expected. You are allowed THREE unexcused absences for the semester. EACH absence beyond three will result in a 2% penalty of your final semester grade. An absence is only considered excused in documented cases of illness or bereavement. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate to borrow lecture notes and get information about any missed announcements or assignments. Once you have done this, I will be more than happy to meet with you to go over the material and answer questions.

Make-up tests/quizzes and extensions on paper assignments will only be granted in the case of an excused absence. In other words, formal documentation is absolutely required to obtain an extension or make up a missed quiz or exam. If a make-up test is given it will more than likely be in a different format than the original test.

Students who arrive after I have taken attendance will be marked late. Please note that lateness counts as 1/3 of an absence. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to make sure I mark you present at the end of the class period.

Keep in mind that participation is not isolated to verbal participation. Sleeping, chatting with friends, and/or passing notes during lectures and screenings will count against your participation grade since by doing these you are not exhibiting any engagement with the course material.

Academic Dishonesty

Any instance of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic F in the class and the incident will be reported to the administration according to university policy. Students are expected to be familiar with the University's definition of Academic Dishonesty available at: www.denison.edu/student-affairs/handbook/ar02.html. In particular, please note, "Neither ignorance nor carelessness is an acceptable defense in cases of plagiarism."

Contacting Me

The best way to contact me is by email. You may email me to let me know that you will be absent, but DO NOT use email to review missed material, send review questions for exams, ask for advice on papers or out-of-class written assignments, or turn in assignments. However, we can use email to schedule appointments to discuss all of these matters in person!! Please try to contact me at least 48 hours in advance to schedule an appointment outside of my office hours.

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately as soon as possible to discuss his or her specific needs. I rely on the Academic Support and Enrichment Center in 104 Doane to verify the need for reasonable accommodations based on documentation on file in their office.

Class Schedule

WEEK ONE (Aug. 30 – Sept. 3)

Introduction: Theory, Theories and Theorizing

WEEK TWO (Sept. 6 – Sept. 10)

Film as Art: Rudolf Arnheim

- Reading: *FT&C*: pp. 312-321 and 212-215.
- Screening: *The Gold Rush* (Chaplin, 1925)

WEEK THREE (Sept. 13 – Sept. 15)

Montage Theory: Eisenstein

- Reading: *FT&C*: pp. 15-42.
- Screening: *October, or Ten Days That Shook the World* (Eisenstein, 1927)

WEEK FOUR (Sept. 20 – Sept. 24)

Bazin I: Ontology and Epistemology of Cinema

- Reading: *FT&C*: pp. 195-211.
- Screening: *Bicycle Thieves* (De Sica, 1948)

WEEK FIVE (Sept. 27 – Oct. 1)

Bazin II: Evolution of Film Language

- Reading: *FT&C*: pp. 43-56; Bazin, “William Wyler, or the Jansenist of Directing” in reading packet.
- Screening: *Best Years of Our Lives* (Wyler, 1946)

Paper #1 Due, Monday Oct. 4!!

WEEK SIX (Oct. 4 – Oct. 8)

Film Semiotics: Metz and Bellour

- Reading: *FT&C*: pp. 68-89; Bellour, “Segmenting/Analyzing” in reading packet.
- Screening: *Gigi* (Minnelli, 1958)

WEEK SEVEN (Oct. 11-15)

Structuralism: The Western

- Reading: *FT&C*: pp. 642-653; Altman, “Towards a Theory of Genre Film” in reading packet.
- Screening: *The Searchers* (Ford, 1956)

WEEK EIGHT (Oct. 18-22)

Wrapping Up: Semiotics and Structuralism

- Reading: Freud, excerpt from “The Dream and the Primal Scene” and Kuntzel, excerpt from “The Film Work 2” both in reading packet.
- Screening: *The Most Dangerous Game* (Pichel and Schoedsack, 1932)

WEEK NINE (Oct. 25 – Oct. 29)

Psychoanalysis I: Freud

- Reading: Clover, “Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film” in reading packet.
- Screening: *Halloween* (Carpenter, 1978, 91 min.)

Paper #2 Due, Monday Nov. 1!!

WEEK TEN (Nov. 1 – Nov. 5)

Psychoanalysis II: The Horror Film

- Reading: -----
- Screening: *Slumber Party Massacre* (Jones, 1982, 77 min.)

Note: Class cancelled on Friday, October 29

WEEK ELEVEN (Nov. 8 – Nov. 12)

Feminism I: Laura Mulvey

- Reading: *FT&C*: pp. 833-844; Williams, “When the Woman Looks” and Doane, “Caught and Rebecca: The Inscription of Femininity as Absence” both in reading packet.
- Screening: *Rebecca* (Hitchcock, 1940, 130 min.)

WEEK TWELVE (Nov. 15 – Nov. 19)

Feminism II: Alternative Theories

- Reading: LaPlace, “Producing and Consuming the Woman’s Film: Discursive Struggle in *Now Voyager*,” and Cherry, “Refusing to Refuse to Look” both in reading packet.
- Screening: *Now, Voyager* (Rapper, 1942, 177 min.)

Thanksgiving Break

WEEK THIRTEEN (Nov. 29 – Dec. 3)

Cognitivism

- Reading: Bordwell, “The Case for Cognitivism” in reading packet.
- Screening: -----

Paper #3 Due, Friday, Dec. 3!!

WEEK FOURTEEN (Dec. 6 – Dec. 10)

Wrap Up and Review

**FINAL EXAM
Thursday, December 16
9am – 11am**

Reading Packet

1. Bazin, Andre. "William Wyler, or the Jansenist of Directing." *Bazin and Work*. Ed. Bert Cardullo. New York: Routledge, 1997. 1-22.
2. Bellour, Raymond. "Segmenting/Analyzing." *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*. Ed. Philip Rosen. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. 66-92.
3. Altman, Charles. "Towards a Theory of Genre Film." *Film Historical-Theoretical Speculations: 1977 Film Studies Annual, Part 2*. Pleasantville, NY: Redgrave Publishing, 1977. 31-43.
4. Freud, Sigmund. Excerpt from "The Dream and the Primal Scene." *Three Case Histories*. Sigmund Freud. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1963. 186-204.
5. Kuntzel, Thierry. Excerpt from "The Film Work 2." *Camera Obscura*, No. 5. Spring 1980: 6-25.
6. Clover, Carol. "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film." *Fantasy and the Cinema*. Ed. James Donald. London: British Film Institute, 1989. 91-131.
7. Williams, Linda. "When the Woman Looks." *Horror: The Film Reader*. Ed. Mark Jancovich. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. 61-66.
8. Doane, Mary Ann. "Caught and Rebecca: The Inscription of Femininity as Absence." *Feminism and Film Theory*. Ed. Constance Penley. New York: Routledge, 1988. 196-215.
9. LaPlace, Maria. "Producing and Consuming the Woman's Film: Discursive Struggle in *Now Voyager*." *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*. Ed. Christine Gledhill. London: British Film Institute, 1987. 138-166.
10. Cherry, Brigid. "Refusing to Refuse to Look." *Horror: The Film Reader*. Ed. Mark Jancovich. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. 169-178.
11. Bordwell, David. "The Case for Cognitivism." *Iris*, No. 9. Spring 1989: 11-40.